

Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture



What is VistA?

VistA is an integrated outpatient and inpatient information system with local flexibility and innovation. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has had automated information systems in its medical facilities since 1985, beginning with the Decentralized Hospital Computer Program (DHCP). DHCP was transformed into the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) in the 1990's. Components of VistA include:

Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), released in 1997, creates a single interface for health care providers to review and update patient information. CPRS capabilities include a Real-Time Order Checking System, a Notification System to alert clinicians to clinically significant events, and a Clinical Reminder System.

VistA Imaging places medical images such as x-rays, pathology slides, scanned documents, cardiology exam results, wound photos, endoscopies, etc., directly and immediately into the patient record.

Bar Code Medication Administration (BCMA) is a point-of-care software solution to ensure that the right patient gets the right medication in the right dose and at the right time.

Why Change to HealtheVet-VistA?

- Increase flexibility to respond to future health needs
- Focus on the patient and data, rather than the facility
- Standardize data to make it fully shareable
- Enhance functionality and usability
- Lower maintenance costs



What is HealtheVet VistA?

The next generation of VistA, HealtheVet-VistA, will retain all of the capabilities of legacy VistA but will provide enhanced flexibility for future health care and compliance with the One VA Enterprise Architecture. It will allow seamless data sharing between all parts of VA to benefit veterans and their families.

HealtheVet-VistA

- Uses the best appropriate modern technology for programming, hardware, software, and networking.
- Uses a national, person-focused health data repository, making it easier and faster for veterans to receive care from multiple VA medical facilities.
- Uses new applications for management, analysis, and research.
- Uses a modular design to facilitate faster software changes to meet emerging needs.
- Complies with the One VA Architecture to improve security and data quality

HealtheVet is a strategy built around five major systems:

- Registration, Enrollment, and Eligibility to bring a veteran into the VA health and benefits systems
- Health Data System to create a true longitudinal health care record, including data from VA and non-VA sources
- Provider Systems used in direct patient care such as CPRS, BCMA, and VistA Imaging
- Management and Financial Systems
- Information and Education Systems

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What is My HealthVet?

My HealthVet is an Internet-based program that creates a new, online environment where veterans, family, and clinicians come together to optimize veterans' health care. It will provide trusted information, online services, health record access, and messaging between veterans and clinicians. Web technology combines essential health record information enhanced by online health resources to enable and encourage patient/clinician collaboration.

My HealthVet provides powerful health education information and health self-assessment tools. A Veterans Health Education Library is available to look up information on medical conditions, medications, health news and preventive health. Veterans can take advantage of an online calendar to set and track their appointments.

My HealthVet is being developed in stages. Future releases will extend access to services such as online prescription refills and co-payment balance review. When the health record portion of the application is available, veterans will be able to securely view and maintain a copy of key portions of their health record from VA's health information system, HealthVet-VistA. As veterans build their health records, they will be able to share all or part of the information in their account with their health care providers, inside and outside VA.



What is HealthPeople?

HealthPeople is a collaborative strategy, including making HealthPeople-VistA (the public version of VistA), that takes VistA outside VA to support high quality, accessible and affordable health care that will substantially improve the health of veterans and all people in the U.S. and other countries.

The program includes:

- Adopting common standards for data and communications,
- Making personal health record (PHR) systems available,
- Increasing the affordability, availability, and interoperability of high performance health information systems and electronic health records (EHR), and
- Enabling the exchange of EHR and PHR information among people and their health care providers.

As the name implies, HealthPeople has a strong people focus, a strong health focus, and reliance on electronic means ("e") as a key enabler.

VA is working closely with the Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services and with many public and private sector organizations and collaboratives. Interest has been expressed by other public and private sector health-related organizations, including the Institute of Medicine, foundations, commercial technology companies, and state, local, and foreign governments.